

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**CUTTING THE GORDIAN KNOT: FORMATION
OF A CONSOCIATIONAL GOVERNMENT
FOR POST-SADDAM IRAQ**

by

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ABSTRACT

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This project explores the prospects and modalities for achieving a best model form of government for post-Saddam Iraq. This "best model" government must reflect the multi-faceted religiopolitical and cultural fabric of Iraqi society. The author envisions an adaptive "confederal" form of government much like that of Canada or Switzerland, consociational in construct. A consociational form of government developed for Iraq must combine elements of federal and communitarian structure that ensure majority voice in government while addressing the minority ethnic and religious diversity of the population. This research will define the applicability of this premise, which allows for majority rule and protection of minority rights.

Religiopolitical situational awareness is imperative if societal consensus is to be achieved during formation of a new government. The advent of post-Saddam era Shia sectarianism is alarming considering the possible consequences, and necessitates immediate measures that can appropriately neutralize or counter a potential extremist religio-centric government. Simultaneously, accommodating Muslim diversity as well as minority and ethnically diverse religious groups is a significant, but corollary hurdle that must be overcome.

To derive and explain this "best model" government the research will incorporate various techniques and methodologies. Primary resources will include my personal dialogue, experiences, and interaction with significant players on the ground in Iraq during the spring of 2003. Secondary resourcing will incorporate an array of professional data, from both academic and journalistic sources. A consociational form of government federated and communitarian in construct decisively applied may well "cut the Gordian knot" and lead to a representative and stable form of government constructed by Iraqis, for Iraqis, and led by Iraqis.

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CUTTING THE GORDIAN KNOT: FORMATION OF A CONSOCIATIONAL GOVERNMENT FOR POST-SADDAM IRAQ

In Greek mythology, Gordius king of Phrygia dedicated his oxcart to Zeus and attached the pole to the yoke with a knot that defied efforts to untie it. This was the Gordian knot. An oracle declared that he who untied it would become leader of all Asia. Later, legend States that when Alexander the Great came to Phrygia, he severed the knot with one blow of his sword. Hence, the saying, "to cut the Gordian Knot," meaning to solve a perplexing problem with a single bold action.¹

"Turn him to any cause of policy,
The Gordian Knot of it he will unloose,
Familiar as his garter . . . "

—Shakespeare, Henry V, 1.i

A CONSOCIATIONAL GOVERNMENT: THE OPTIMAL CHOICE

Post-9/11 the United States is joined in a Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). This GWOT resulted in combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and now into nation building. In Iraq, the present U.S. administration is committed to establishing a "democratic form" of government that is representative of all Iraqis. The commitment of \$87 billion in U.S. financial appropriations, a large contingent of U.S. combat troops in excess of 100,000, in addition to thousands of coalition forces, a network of International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and the U.S.-brokered entry of the UN to assist in future elections are indicators of the huge investment by the U.S.

Success or failure of U.S. policy in the Iraqi nation-building endeavor rests ultimately on the type of government that will be established there. The handover of sovereignty on 30 June 2004 is only a first step in that process. The type of government that will provide the political framework is the vital link to success. This new government must consider the heterogeneous nature of Iraqi society with its multi-cultural diversity, ethnic, and religious differences; one that ensures federal as well as communitarian concepts. A consociational "form" of government that incorporates both federal and communitarian elements can provide a workable polity and societal stability within this multi-diverse nation. The importance of a consociational construct for all Iraqis is not about geographical autonomy, but more importantly religiopolitical and ethnic autonomy. Historically nation-building government systems (successful or unsuccessful) put in place are systems that usually remain.² Therefore, the *right* government system in place is of vital interest to the future of Iraq.

In Kurdistan for example, there are radical elements in Dahuk, Arbil, and As Sulaymaniyah seeking total independence from a future Iraqi nation-state. Since the end of the Gulf War in 1991, the Kurds have lived in an autonomous state. The dream of a separate Kurdistan is alive and well among the Kurds. Decisive action must be taken to provide the Kurds with limited autonomy without opening the way for the more radical elements among the Kurds to demand absolute independence or isolated autonomy. The oil fields of Kirkuk located in Dahuk do not belong to the Kurds, though the Kurds consider them theirs. The oil rich fields are part of the national wealth and should be maintained under "federated" control as a national resource. The Turkoman and Chaldean minorities who live among the Kurds are another critical consideration within the scope of ethnoreligious, political, and cultural importance, and without specific representation, these peoples will most likely suffer a tyranny of the majority.³

Kurdish independence or separatist autonomy could inflame Shia rhetoric vying for uncontested majority rule or even a separatist state for the Shiites. The potential for fragmenting an already fragile political landscape is likely. The formation of a consociational confederated Iraqi government would allow provincial governments to have semi-autonomous rule while the confederation is bound together by a strong central governing body that ensures such things as retaining the oil field revenues for the benefit of "all" Iraqis, regardless of where they reside.

Developing a consociational government for Iraq would best replicate the essential elements needed to form an optimal government model. Under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, what is modern-day Iraq was divided up into "vilayets" that separated the country into three major geographic regions - Mosul in the north, Baghdad in the center, and Basra in the south. Under this old system, these regions had little or no socio-economic or political interaction with one another; under a structured consociational system, the only resemblance to the Ottoman vilayets would be geographical similarity. The consociation concept is not divisional, but rather incorporates and harnesses the strengths of each region. After 35 years of monolithic rule and over 50 years of republican regimes, this is a new concept. A federated construction of consociational "camps" provides for trans-generational, religious, cultural, and ethnic groupings joined in semi-autonomous "camps" jointly governed by coalitions of the leaders of each.⁴

Benjamin R. Barber thinks a confederated system may afford the best opportunity for successful governance in several present-day Islamic cultures. In his book, *Jihad Versus McWorld*, he says:

"It certainly seems possible that the most attractive democratic ideal in the face of the brutal realities of Jihad and the dull realities of McWorld will be a confederal union of semi-autonomous communities smaller than nation-states,

tied together into regional economic associations and markets larger than nation-states—participatory and self-determining in local matters at the bottom, representative and accountable at the top. The nation-state would play a diminished role, and sovereignty would lose some of its political potency.”⁵

United States' strategic interest seeks a truly representative and inclusive Iraqi government. It is therefore essential that the document creating such a confederal government must be free from exclusivist bias, be secular in nature, and establish pluralist precepts. The document that can accommodate this sort of flexibility is probably an “adapted” constitutional format. The basic structure of the government creates four semi-autonomous consociational camps divided among the existing eighteen provinces and twenty-five million inhabitants. A central governing power is established that engenders ethnic-based politics and moves away from class-based politics, embracing post-modern era recognition of ethnic and primordial ties. The four camps are (1) Kurdistan in the north, primarily Sunni Kurds, Turkoman, and Chaldeans; (2) the remainder of the northern provinces primarily Sunni Arabs, Christian, Yezidis, and other ethnic/tribal minorities; (3) the central camp primarily Sunni Arabs and Shia Arabs equally represented, and (4) the southern camp with a majority population of Shiites (see figure 1).

This strong central governing body provides direct input to the people; reciprocally the citizens have access to the central power. The emphasis is on both unity and diversity. Switzerland is an example of one nation with a successful consociational form of government (since 1291), with 26 cantons that operate under this “federal” form of governing. Argentina and Canada have similar governments with almost identical numerical populations as Iraq (around 25 million).⁶ For Iraq, a significant advantage of a consociational government is that it lends itself directly to the cross-cultural symmetry of Iraq's multi-ethnic and religiopolitical diversity while emphasizing the secularist aspect of the old regime as opposed to a Ba'thist monolithic national bureaucracy. The formation of a countrywide confederation under a consociation mechanism serves the diverse “camps,” with a unifying central power acting as the principal agent ensuring equality of all the people within the consociation. Again, the focus remains on the people as the source of legitimacy as opposed to the state. The central power is the principal agent that links the “camps” together through “federated” ties for their mutual advantage. Each camp is constructed according to their religious, ideological, or socio-cultural characteristics. The guarantee of ethnic-based equality is affirmed in a constitution or articles of confederation before ratification. The institution of such a system then affirms religious, ideological, and cultural differences, while granting political semi-autonomous rule. The consociation camps would be granted substantive local semi-autonomy for domestic political

issues that are particular to that camp; while more "nation-state," type issues are decided by the central government.

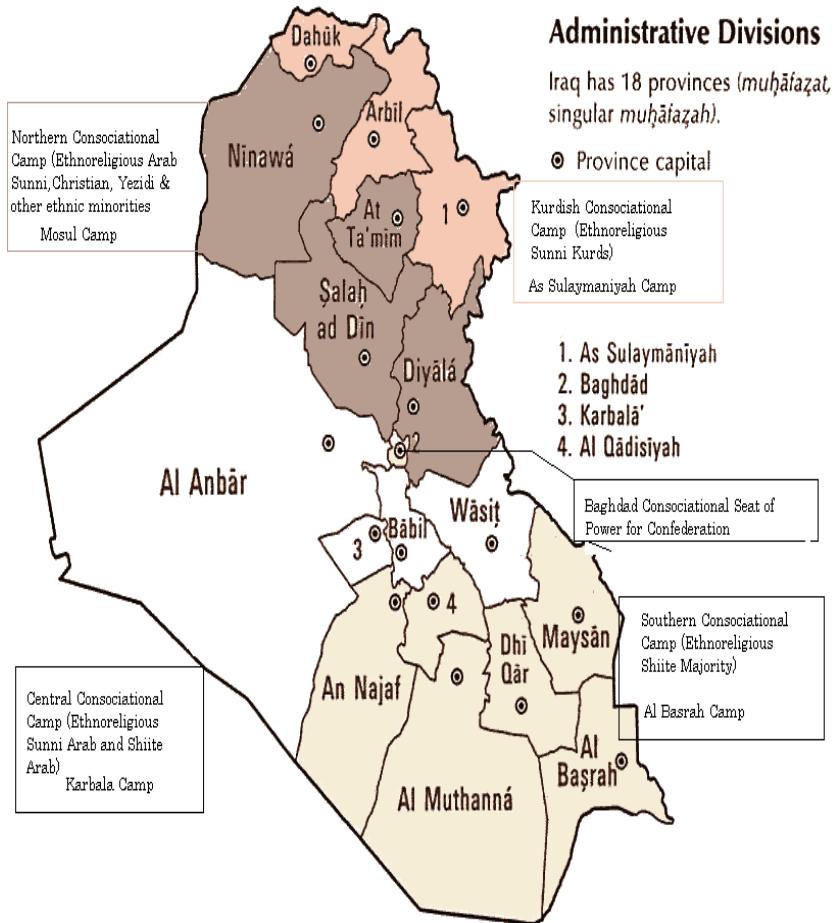


FIGURE 1. FOUR CONFEDERATED DIVISIONS OF IRAQ CONSOCIATIONAL GOVERNMENT

<www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/images/ethnolinguistic.jpg.htm>

The specifics of how interrelationships are played out and how the elected caucuses of the various camps interact with the central power in determining policy will need to be carefully orchestrated in the approved articles of confederation or constitution. It is during the writing of this document and the subsequent ratification of the same that the idiosyncrasies of dividing

responsibility appropriately coupled with identifying critical areas of concern will become more obvious. Representative caucuses from each camp would work out a confederated bridgework of shared power with the central government. Some powers would be shared concurrently by both the central power and provincial camps. One, important element in this configuration is the primacy of the central power in protecting the national rights of the majority people while ensuring the integrity of the minority people, to include the civil rights of all individuals.⁷

The formation of a bicameral legislature for the new Iraqi central power would serve the interests of the camps at the national level. Each of the “camps” would be represented equally in one house and according to population in the other. In this way, legislation could be initiated in either chamber and approved by both. A president and a governing executive body would be selected by both houses sitting in a joint session, or the term may be based on the confidence of both chambers – there are varieties of plausible and workable formulas for the governing bodies to consider.⁸ The individual semi-autonomous camps would have legislative and administrative organs of their own to carry out local government responsibilities. The judicial system would consist of a regional system of judges and courts elected by the camps while a central power-based Supreme Court would have the authority to adjudicate decisions arising from the camps.

The consociational government in the new Iraq is configured to manage the various communities of ethno-religious specificity, secular groups, and other minority and tribal communities (See figure 2).

The critical piece of this configuration allows for the central power of Iraq to ensure the representation of each community, and the full participation of its members in the governance of the state. Establishment of such a government must not be done unilaterally, and will require a basic consensus of validating the necessity of inter-camp power sharing dynamics. There cannot be a sectarian bias or majority-rule domination that neglects the minorities, or disenfranchises them from the processes and full participation in the forming or the day-to-day functioning of government.

U.S. STRATEGIC RECONSTRUCTION GOALS IN POST-SADDAM IRAQ

On September 23, 2003, the President of the United States, in a speech delivered before the U.N. General Assembly, stated that the primary goal of the U.S. in post-Saddam Iraq reconstruction is the establishment of “Iraqi self-government.” Based on the President’s statement, and considering previously stated U.S. policy; the establishment of a stable representative self-government appears to be the centerpiece of U.S. nation building

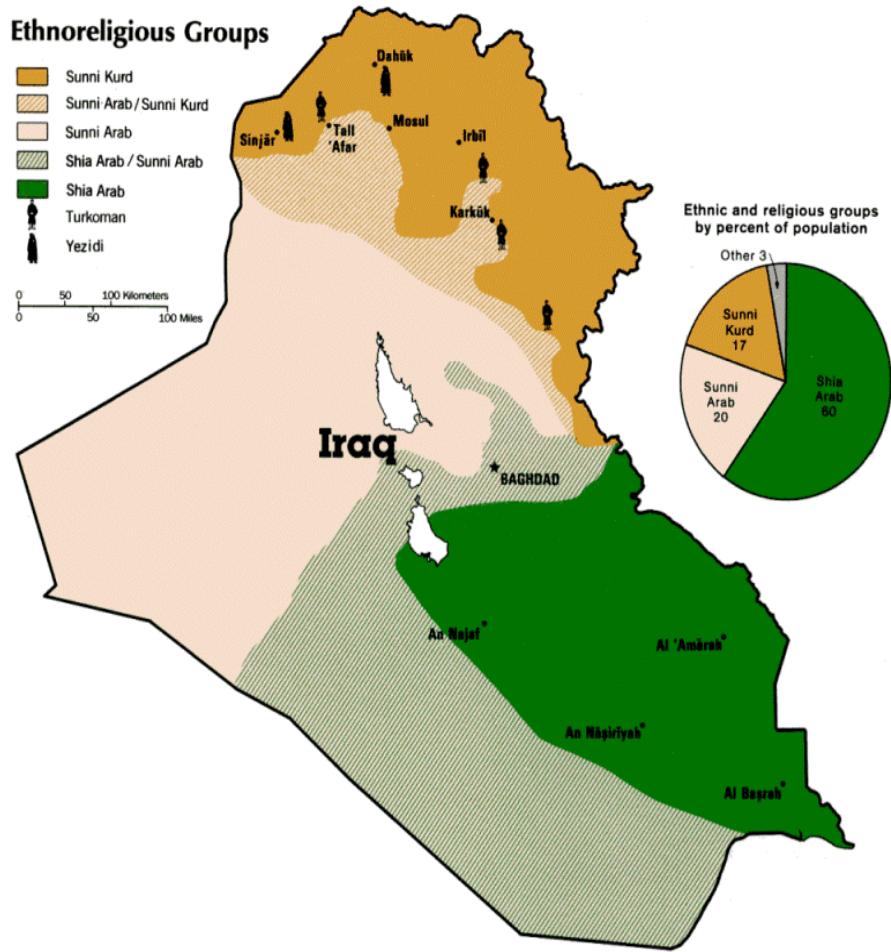


FIGURE 2. ETHNORELIGIOUS GROUPS

www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/images/ethnolinguistic.jpg.htm

reconstruction strategy in post-Saddam Iraq. Others have espoused this goal with the further caveat that to achieve that objective Iraqi cultural, religious, ethnic, and traditional mores must not be displaced in the process.⁹ Coalition Provisional Authority Administrator L. Paul Bremer outlined seven steps on the path to realization of the U.S. strategy, in what he termed a “path to full sovereignty” on September 5, 2003. In his speech, Bremer spoke of the criticality of Iraqis

running their own government. He related that Iraqis are resourceful and adaptive, saying, “you can govern yourselves, but you need a framework for your government.”¹⁰

Bremer outlined the seven steps as establishing a temporary Iraqi government, deciding how to write a constitution, having Iraqis begin to run the country, having Iraqis write a new constitution, ratifying the constitution, electing a government, and then ending the coalition government. The seminal question persists, are U.S. post-Saddam Iraq reconstruction goals feasible? If so, how can they best be incorporated and what processes should be utilized to achieve the objectives. The policy regarding U.S. reconstruction objectives has changed several times since first articulated by the President and members of the Administration, however a “representative” theme has remained constant and is the motif consistently reiterated today.¹¹

Other substantive criteria must be considered as well if an acceptable and legitimate government that is representative of all Iraqis is to be achieved. In February 2003, the U.S. institute of Peace and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars hosted a conference to examine the challenges of ethnic and religious reconciliation in post-Saddam Iraq. The conference conclusion argued that the following critical areas are paramount in creating a representative government for “all” Iraqis. (1) consensus among the Iraqi people, (2) a government that represents the ethnic and religious diversity of the Iraqi people, (3) an Iraqi government that has a secular base, (4) a government that provides full citizenship to all Iraqis and is not ethnic or religious based, (5) a system that prevents political fragmentation along geographic, ethnic, or religious lines and (6) a “type” of government that reflects Iraqi diversity¹² Jihan Hajibardri noted [regarding a new Iraqi Government], it “must be a multicultural, multiparty state where ethnicity, sects, and tribes play a role in the democratic process.”¹³ Some form of multiethnic incorporation of Iraqi society is essential. A government should be created where no one group’s beliefs or specific identity is imposed on another. The freedom of religion must be guaranteed, and a system inculcated that fosters trust between the diverse ethnic and religious groups. The inclusion of checks and balances between central and local governances that enhances the mutual advantage of the civil process for all the Iraqi people is essential.¹⁴ Herein lays the extreme difficulty, in order to “cut the Gordian Knot” the designers of this new Iraqi constitution must deal with complex asymmetrical competing issues of tribal, ethnic, religious, and cultural differences. The framers of this new Iraqi constitution would be better off without the encumbrance of sectarian, tribal, cultural, or ethno-religious bias. However, failure to consider these salient factors may negate the attainment of U.S. objectives.¹⁵

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: TAMING ETHNO-RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL TYRANNY

The greatest threat to a “democratic form” of government for Iraq is the potential for one group to use the electoral process to dominate the country and exclude minorities. Shiites make up 60 percent of the Iraqi population, and a majority Shia government could disenfranchise other Iraqis. A key for Iraqi government is whether it can be fashioned into a system that deals effectively with a potential “tyranny of the majority.”¹⁶ Without specific checks and balances to prevent such tyranny extremist Islamic government is likely.

Current events in Iraq lend credence to the assumption that there is a populist, albeit sectarian movement rampant within the Iraqi Shiite community that is actively in opposition to American strategic interests. An example is the September 2003 murder of Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim (the former spiritual leader of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq founded in 1982 and headquartered in Tehran). Al-Hakim was supported by the Iranian government, which aided him in establishing the 10,000 member Badr Brigade of exiled Iraqi militia. Al-Hakim’s religiopolitical life-style and ensuing murder probably indicates there is a fractious generational power struggle within the Iraqi Shiite community. Another antagonist group is led by activist Sheik Muqtada al-Sadr, who claims for himself *Usuli* (Shiite theological rule) inherited from his late father (Muhammad al-Sadr assassinated by Saddam). Al-Sadr calls for leading Shia clerics to leave the country, among them Ali al-Sistani, leader of the “Quietists.” The Grand Ayatollah Sistani has emerged as the leader of the Iraqi Shiite community; he opposed the U.S. plan of regional caucuses, gaining concession for direct elections, and delayed the signing of the interim constitution. Sistani’s action promises to heighten the existing rift among the Sunnis and Shiites, not to mention the religious and ethnic minorities who already feel alienated and are fearful of forced assimilation tactics by the Shiites. If the Shia gain political control of the country, the minorities, both ethnic and religious, expect forced assimilation and disenfranchisement. Sunnis located in the “Sunni Triangle” (Tikrit, Ramadi, Baghdad, and Fallujah) are creating as much havoc and violence as possible to retain their control and power, as a coalition victory in their thinking means payback from the Shiites.¹⁷

Post-conflict United States strategic considerations failed to adequately weight the extreme religiopolitical challenges of post-Saddam Iraq, probably because strategic leaders did not fully understand that the secular Ba’athist political system repressed the underlying religiopolitical antipathy.¹⁸ In the aftermath of the Ba’athist regime expulsion, Iraqi society is locked in the throes of an imbalance of power in which many ethnoreligious and political factions are competing for a voice.¹⁹ In Iraq, 75 percent of the people belong to one of 150 tribes and subscribe to tribal mores above any allegiance to a nation-state, democracy, or federalism.

There is an historical superficial identification with fellow Arabs, however the concept of Arabic tribal humanism reigns. This tribal humanism focuses loyalty on the family, extended family, and the tribe. Unlike Western culture (amoral familism), in Iraqi culture the individual is not the focus of society, and there is not a sense of common nationhood. In addition to family/tribal identity being a Shia, Kurd, Sunni, Turkoman, Chaldean, Christian, or other identity comes before national identity as Iraqis.²⁰ An important factor regarding this propensity toward “tribal humanism” is to take advantage of the positive concepts within this social construct and direct them toward a beneficent societal purpose. Furthermore, a governmental plan that channels these positive elements into an optimal governmental structure is the government that will win the “hearts and minds” of the Iraqi people.

Application of national instruments of power submerged in the realization of these ethnic, religious, and tribal idiosyncrasies is essential, otherwise these pivotal issues are neglected and the new Iraq will look a lot like the old Iraq with Ba’athist “Nazism” replaced by extremist Iranian-influenced Shia “Nazism,” or a revived Sunni “Fascism.” In fact, the “*sine qua non*” of successful statecraft may be the formation of a government that finds a way to direct extremist tendencies toward constructive societal concerns. Decisive action is needed to take advantage of what is working and what may have a chance to work now, in other words to start with what can be done now, not with what cannot be done.

THE FUTURE OF FEDERAL CONCEPTS IN IRAQI NATION-BUILDING

Understanding the unique “federal” approach of a consociational government is necessary in realizing its relevance in accommodating the multi-cultural diversity across all of Iraq. Nelson A. Rockefeller in *The Future of Federalism* postulates four critical ways that federalism functions: “First, the federal idea fosters diversity within unity; second, the federal idea permits and encourages creativity, imagination, and innovation in meeting the needs of the people; third, the federal idea is pluralistic (encouraging diversity of thought, of culture, and of beliefs); and fourth, the federal idea is characterized by a balance which prevents excesses and invites the full, free play of innovation and initiative.”²¹ A consociational government for Iraq would incorporate a federated construct that encompasses all the concepts of federalism as defined by Rockefeller. Furthermore, a consociational model enhances the precepts of federalism while incorporating religiopolitical and ethnic strengths of diversity present in Iraqi culture. Consociational government is a non-territorial federation in which the polity is divided into permanent trans-generational, religious, cultural, ethnic, or ideological groupings [camps], federated together, and jointly governed by coalitions of the leaders of each.²²

To have the best advantage for accommodation without forced assimilation of ethno-cultural and religious minorities in Iraq, a consociational or power-sharing type of government invests in the diversity of the community.²³ In the case of post-Saddam Iraq the majority Shiites, along with the Kurdish Sunnis, Arab Sunnis, Christian minorities, and several other lesser ethnic and religious minorities form a cauldron ripe for religious and ethnic violence. To attempt forced assimilation of the minorities in this multi-cultural religious and minority environment is unacceptable.²⁴ A most frightening prospect could be a Shiite led majority that views other minorities as non-integrable, that is, "unassimilable." If this should happen, the consequences will be catastrophic. Concomitantly, according to Vamik Volkan in *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies: From Clinical Practice to International Relationships*:

"Relationships between the non-assimilable minority and the majority or the nation-state government become even more strained if that minority is linked to a state or nation that in the past inflicted a deep trauma upon the majority group . . . after the balance of power changes in favor of the majority, the minority may be seen as so dangerous, so contaminated, that it should be eliminated."²⁵

Volkan's description mirrors the Saddam-led Iraqi regime's 30-year treatment of the Shiites. In order to counter the effects of Saddam's regime there is a need to implement "a politics of recognition of differences alongside a politics of equal dignity."²⁶ Incorporating a consociational government that guarantees minority rights will afford minority groups' equal rights with the members of the majority, and in addition, they would be given lawful mechanisms to express, and preserve their own culture. According to Albert Lijphart, consociationalism has four basic and indispensable characteristics: "a power-sharing coalition, proportionality, mutual veto, and segmental autonomy."²⁷ Accordingly success of an Iraqi consociational government will require communitarian-minded leaders who are tolerant, empathetic, situationally attuned, and capable of incorporating the divergent interests of this inter-camp cooperation.

Furthermore, the camp leaders' abilities to foster solutions to the political challenges that may arise and their determination to make the system work is extremely important, otherwise the consociationalism breaks down and likely leads to interethnic conflict. Lijphart identifies four areas of implementation necessary for consociationalism to be successful:

"(a) The political leaders from the rival segments should have the ability to accommodate the divergent interest and demands of their own community and they must have an effective control over it. (b) They should be able to transcend cleavages and to work jointly, to cooperate to a great extent with the elites of the rival segments. (c) They should be committed to the continuance of the system and to its stability. (d) Finally, the elites should understand the perils of political fragmentation."²⁸

Thomas L. Friedman in a December 2003 *New York Times* article stated that the primary sources of legitimacy and political expression in the Sunni and Shiite areas of Iraq are tribal and religious. Friedman said that “this dependence upon, and respect for, religious authority will be reflected in the first post-Saddam government whether it comes about by indirect or direct elections.”²⁹ There are differences of opinion about future governments or political constructs as to whether a consociational government will work in Iraq. Some presuppose that dividing the country consociationally into a Kurdish north, Sunni center, and Shia south is too stereotypical. Proponents of this supposition say it is too simplified for fully understanding Iraqi culture. Furthermore, those who support this theory of “primordializing” Iraqi society claim that it is erroneous to identify Kurds as being tied to ethnic loyalties while Sunni and Shia religionists are affixed to tribal and sectarian ties. Additionally, these theorists reject the assertion that Sunnis are sympathetic to Ba’athism or some variant of pan-Arab nationalism while Shiite loyalties are toward extreme Islamism. The “primordialization” theorists reject religiopolitical identification among both Sunnis and Shiites, and discount an authority channeled through tribal or religious clans.³⁰

Forming a consociational Iraqi government is “a” means to optimize unity within diversity among the multi-ethnic, religious, and cultural communities of the nation. To choose a consociational construct as the optimal government for Iraq is to engender the strengths of diversity that allows for a semi-autonomous rule of these four larger communities; north, Kurdish, center, and south. Dividing the country into four distinct consociations is not a return to the Ottoman “vilayets,” neither is this proposal a stereotyping or primordializing of Iraqi society. The formation of such a government, though complex, is warranted to take advantage of the extant diversities as opposed to ignoring them. In Mosul, there are Kurds, Sunnis, Christians, Yezidis, Turkomans, secularists, and other diverse groups living together; there is no better example for the applicability of this type of government for all of Iraq. The framework is there; unity within diversity is not only working but thriving. Fared Yassen, an advisor to a member of the Provisional Governing Council in Iraq, stated, “The end game: democracy is a realistic goal. Visit Kurdistan, Karbala, Mosul.”³¹

James Dobbins identifies the critical element in nation-building in post-Saddam Iraq as consensus on a new constitutional end-state. Since Iraq has never had a constitution or type of government that involved “all” Iraqis either in the interests of the government or the functional processes of the government, he postulates that failure to come to consensus on a constitutional end-state for the new Iraqi government will be a harbinger of instability. Though Dobbins is a proponent of consensus, he seems to have some doubts about the viability of a

“three-party federation” in which Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds share power. He classifies “pluralist democracy” that operates within the context of representation from multiple ethnic and religious communities within the same realm; however, he states that “there is no question that some form of Kurdish autonomy in a federal structure will be required.” However, he disputes the existence of a demographic reality to the Kurdish North, Sunni Center, and Shiite South, though he is not clear on what sort of configuration the future Iraqi federation might be.³²

It may be that Mosul is that “right” starting point, a model that already contains substantive socio-economic, cultural, and religiopolitical successes, and may have the ingredients for successful application elsewhere in Iraq. Some seeds of success have already germinated there, why not consider the “Mosul-model” to ascertain if the model can be transplanted, and grow in other areas of the Iraqi geopolitical landscape? Politics should seek to add and multiply, taking advantage of existing success; this is a positive step, whereas dividing and subtracting is usually negative.³³ The rule of law, the rights of the individual, economic needs and geopolitical considerations are extremely important but they are considerably devalued by failure to understand the significant religiopolitical issues. Iraq is a complex ethnic and religious environment, with a dominant paternalistic tribal culture, and to gloss over this may temporarily work, but eventually the old underlying fissures just below the surface will foment hatred and violence. Nihilistic terrorists, former Sunni Ba’thist hardliners, Shiite mavericks, and no doubt Al Qaida insurgents in Iraq want to defeat the United States and disrupt any nation-building processes whether economic, informational, diplomatic, or military. Their chief aim is to destabilize the region, and thwart the successes achieved already, and ultimately defeat U.S. interests politically.³⁴ In order for U.S. goals to succeed, security must be maintained to create a stable environment, and the influx of financial aid in the form of billions of dollars must be interjected into the Iraqi economy to build up the economic infrastructure. If these fundamental steps are taken, a consociational government can accommodate the essential framework necessary to establish a functional confederated form of government for Iraq.

THE “MOSUL-MODEL”: A PROTOTYPE FOR AN OPTIMAL GOVERNMENT

During the spring of 2003 I met, observed, and talked with civic and religious leaders in Baghdad, and later in Mosul and throughout the Northern Iraqi provinces as well as Kurdistan. Based on three months of interaction and observation the “Mosul model” is already functioning as an example of consensus; politically, economically, ethno-religiously, cross-culturally, and in diversity among the people of that region. A similar construct such as exists in Mosul was proposed for Iraq as early as 1992 by the Iraqi National Congress (INC) and reiterated by others

to include an independent task force sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations in February 2003.³⁵

A thorough understanding of multi-cultural interaction among the populace of the Mosul region is critical for adapting the methodology countrywide. The successes are already evident in the cooperation and functionality of the elected temporary government (May 2003) which is representative of the demography; including varied members of the society, to include, Sunni Kurds, Sunni Arabs, Christians, Turkomans, Yezidis, Chaldeans, and other secular, and ethnoreligiously diverse people. James Dobbins opposes quick “national party-based parliamentary election[s]” in Iraq, suggesting instead that the focus for the provisional authority be application of what he calls “democratic building blocks,” that is such things as the rule of law, free press, economic recovery, and “local elected authorities.” Mr. Dobbins calls attention to the Kurdish governances in the Mosul and surrounding regions that have already experienced some success in these areas. Since Dobbins’ writing, which occurred before the arrival of U.S. combat troops, Kurdistan and Ninwah province of Mosul have incorporated an elected governing body that is inclusive, pluralist, and ethnically diverse and has a successful free press and the rule of law. Over 11,000 Iraqi police officers and security forces have been trained by the U.S. Army to replace American ground troops there, and an emerging economic vitality is creating “democratic building blocks” that significantly contribute to successful government.³⁶

In mid-May of 2003, I brokered the creation of a multi-faith religious council in Mosul. The council was made up of Sunni Imams and Christian Bishops with plans to add other minority religious groups to the dialogue. The multi-faith council is an example of a “democratic building block” in that it fostered a setting for dialogue among diverse groups, allowed for the sharing of ideas, and served as a conduit for informational distribution. The validity of such a council cannot be over-emphasized in that the representatives at this multi-faith council were religious leaders with direct access to and influence on the majority of the population. The inter-faith dialogue averted a great deal of potential violence through information sharing, trust, communication, and cooperation.

In retrospect, the dialogue produced a greater understanding of Islamic and Christian thought, supported and appreciated by moderate Islamic Imams (who rejected terrorism). Locally this council helped Coalition action against terrorist Wahhabi and extremist Islamic efforts, identified mosques that espoused inflammatory anti-coalition rhetoric, and prevented undifferentiated tactics by American forces. The council provided a unique forum for these religious leaders to advocate an end to violence and devised means to reach peaceful solutions

in many high risk missions involving American soldiers, and finally the council was a refutation of the tendency to “demonize” all Muslims.³⁷ A key element for success in the future is to seek common ground and forge more of these “democratic building blocks.” Certainly, this type of dialogue is one means to defeat terrorism and help nullify militant Islamism. Such dialogue may be the seed of what could be a genesis toward a positive “Islamic Reformation.”³⁸

The Yezidis are a religioethnic minority primarily located north of Mosul along the Turkish border in an area called Sheikh Adi; their main shrine is located at Lalish. This minority group has suffered persecution and exclusion throughout their long history; they are representative of many other similar ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq that have suffered similar treatment. Today, however, they are represented on the elected governing body of Mosul, the first such occurrence in their history that reaches back to the Middle Ages. Their leader, Shaykh Jebel Sinjar, in May 2003 presented eight formal requests to the Coalition Provisional Authority, requests that codify their demands for religious and political freedoms. The eight Yezidi requests³⁹ are representative of the concerns that many of the minority religious and ethnic groups have which center on guaranteed religious freedom and equal representation. It is imperative to be cognizant of these concerns in the nation building process.

Another example of an ethnoreligious and ethnic minority concern is that of the Assyrian Catholic Church. The church has nearly 700,000 adherents in Iraq. I met with the bishops on a weekly basis, and one of their concerns involved return of properties seized by the Saddam regime. Archbishop Mar Thoma Sliwa on several occasions gave me documents and deeds of property owned by the Church, but no longer in their possession due to there seizure during Saddam's rule. This concern is representative of every minority group with which I met; all of them had property issues. The Assyrian Church Council of Bishops raised concerns at every meeting regarding their fear of disenfranchisement from a new government unless steps are taken to ensure their equal representation. In over 20 meetings with the Islamic Clergy Association of Mosul led by Imam Faleh Khaleel Hamodi (who is also an elected member of the Mosul-regional government council and spokesman for 1400 Imams, representing 800 Mosques); he and the other Imams expressed their fears of reprisals and disenfranchisement if the Shiites gain majority rule in a future Iraqi government.

It is important to note that the Sunni Arabs, Sunni Kurds, Christians, Yezidis, and a multitude of other groups representing dozens of minority and ethnic diversities sit on the elected governing council of Mosul and were duly elected by the people. This governing body represents “all” Iraqis of the region, and is a testament to what can be accomplished across the whole of Iraq if the framers of the new government will listen to the voices of the people. For the

U.S. to achieve a “self-governing” Iraq, within the context of a “democratic form” of government, a proven method should be adopted. The adaptation of the “Mosul-model,” a consociational “federal/communitarian” approach, can expedite the creation of a self-governing system for all Iraq without sacrificing minority concerns while thoroughly understanding the potential for a tyranny of the majority. The success of achieving such a goal is dependent upon understanding and accommodation of the people and incorporation of the governmental modalities that make Mosul a success story. Furthermore, much of the day-to-day civil governing, construction, functionality, evaluation, and testing processes have already proven the Mosul governmental framework is working.⁴⁰ Choosing to use the existing “Mosul-model” will enable the framers of the consociation to achieve a durable system of government.

WINNING THE FUTURE

This research sought to determine whether U.S. post-Saddam reconstruction policy in Iraq is feasible? The formation of a “representative form” of government in Iraq is the watermark for recognizing success. The recommendation to adopt a confederated consociational government system built on the “Mosul-model” as the optimal choice best accommodates the unique religiopolitical and multi-cultural aspects of Iraqi society toward stability and equal representation.

The establishment of consociational semi-autonomous camps configured within a construct of confederated northern, Kurdish, central, and southern divisional camps anchored to a strong central governing power serving as the principal agent for the federation is most probably the optimal answer for creating an inclusive “all” Iraqi system of government. The \$87 billion recently appropriated by Congress will begin to bolster the economic infrastructure and create the capability to produce jobs and employ the unemployed, reinvigorate an impoverished economy, and establish a base line for reentry into the world economy. The vigorous U.S. led campaign to reconfigure, significantly reduce, and/or forgive Iraq’s international debt is important to Iraqi stabilization and viability in the global market. Maintaining of ground troops in adequate numbers to ensure security and stability to allow for normalcy to have a chance is essential. Incorporation of multi-lateral assistance in all these endeavors is critical to assuage world opinion and promote regional stability. The promotion of “democratic building blocks” among the diverse ethnoreligious and cultural groups and fostering of ideological endeavors will advance cooperation, communication, and coordination within a fragmented society.

The “Mosul-model” government as a template for structuring an optimal Iraqi-wide government is recommended as the best course of action based on the extant data and

success of that government system. Analysis indicates that this model already incorporates U.S. post-Saddam reconstruction objectives and furthermore, the utilization of this model lends credibility to U.S. implied goals, significantly recognition of and accommodation of “all” Iraqis in an inclusive pluralist polity that is “participatory and self-determining in local matters at the bottom, representative and accountable at the top.”⁴¹

United States policy-makers should recommend adaptation of the “Mosul-model” government as a working template for studied application countrywide. This system structures government in such a way that participatory citizenship is realized, while providing a mechanism for socio-religious, ethnic, cultural, and minority concerns without sacrificing national resources or political necessities. The “Mosul-model” meets the President’s call for the establishment of self-governing Iraqis, creating “a politics of recognition of differences alongside a politics of equal dignity.”⁴² This model allows for expeditious execution of Iraqi self-governance lending credibility to U.S. Iraqi reconstruction policy endeavors, and increases multi-lateral coalescence in the reconstruction efforts. Semi-autonomous “camps” (configured in the north, Kurdistan, center, and south) with a strong central government power acting as the principal agent derived through the work of representatives to form a consociational Iraqi government “cuts the Gordian Knot,” creating an optimal government, founded by Iraqis, for Iraqis, and led by Iraqis.

WORD COUNT=6,112

APPENDIX

IRAQI CONSOCIATIONAL MODEL DEFINED

Consortial government in its purist form is not what the proposal of this research is about. In essence consociationalism as defined in this research project comprises both communitarian precepts and federal concepts. Theoretically the research envisions Iraq's diverse societal structure achieving a dynamic balance between state, market, and community within the context of its multi-cultural diversity.

The reality of this research indicates the necessity for "right" governmental framework that represents all Iraqi society and has at its core that which is best for the utility and stability of the people. The analysis suggests Mosul as the best template for application nationwide. The reason Mosul is the choice correlates directly to the major successes achieved there during post-combat Phase IV, Security, and Stability Operations (SASO). The cooperation of the population in embracing military civil operations and Coalition Provisional Authority endeavors to build peace was remarkable and led to the first election in Iraq during early May 2003. The election was a genuine multi-party, diverse, ethnic, tribal, and religious minority participation resulting in representation from most of the demography within the region. Concomitantly large civil, governmental, economic, agricultural, and educational program initiatives were successfully instituted in Mosul in great part due to the interrelated cooperation of tribal, ethnic, religious, and minority leaders.

It is the opinion of this research that the same basic principles that make Mosul a success can make the new Iraqi government successful. The critical element in adapting this as a national model is to overlay the multi-cultural political reality template over a federated government construct. Then, each consociational camp, like Mosul would have a local administration with a political power distribution. Local governments in this construct make multiple low-level decisions, including directing buildings construction, running the police, municipalities, utilities, collecting taxes, administering courts of law, managing economic activities, setting local regulations/ordinances, and other such things. The local consociational governments operationally and tactically execute a lot of decisions/actions, but do not change central government policies except in accordance with federal statutes.

The central government is the strategic agent for linking the local consociations together at the national level. The national government officials elected from the consociations implement national-level governmental functions through a federal executive, legislative, and judiciary body. This centralized structure enables the nationally elected government

representatives to lawfully exercise their authority on behalf of the consociational camps. Under this construct, a bicameral legislature affords all Iraqis equal representation under the rule of law, thus ensuring that Iraqi multi-cultural diversity issues alongside majority concerns are dealt with lawfully. The national government protects minority rights, prevents tyranny rule of the majority, and as matter of course represents the nation-state in the world community in matters of national defense, global trade, international diplomacy, and other such matters.

ENDNOTES

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² James Dobbins et al, *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Pittsburg: Rand Publishers, 2003), xiii, 2.

³ Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds of Iraq* (New York, St. Martins Press, 1992), 112.

⁴ Andrew W. Terrill, "Nationalism, Sectarianism, and the Future of the U.S. Presence in Post-Saddam Iraq," Strategic Studies Institute (July 2003), p. 2.

⁵ Benjamin R. Barber, "Jihad Vs. McWorld," *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 1992, Vol. 272, p.65.

⁶ Daniel J. Elazar, *Two Peoples . . . One Land* (New York: University Press of America 1991), 109-116.

⁷ Daniel J. Elazar, *Federal Systems of the World: A Handbook of Federal, Confederated and Autonomy Arrangements* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center Press, 1993) 11-16.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 112-114.

⁹ Craig Raborn, "Rebuilding Post-War Iraq with Livable Communities and Democratic Local Governance," 18 September 2003; available from <http://www.pragueinstitute.org/iraq.html>; Internet; accessed 18 September 2003.

¹⁰ "Bremer Says Iraq Moving on Path to Full Sovereignty," 7 September 2003; available from <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfor/Archive/2003/Sep/05-277744.html>; Internet; accessed 7 September 2003.

¹¹ Ibid., p 3 of 6.

¹² The conference was moderated by Tamara Wittes, Middle East Institute specialist and Research and Studies program officer. A distinguished panel consisting of Amatzia Baram of the University of Haifa, Rend Rahim Francke, executive director of the Iraq Foundation, Hatem Mukhlis, chief of political section, Iraqi National Movement; and Jihan Hajibardri with American University's International Peace and Conflict Resolution Program.

¹³ "Sectarian Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Iraq," 18 September 2003; available from <http://www.usip.events/2003/0303_ESiraq-sectarian.html>; Internet; accessed 19 September 2003.

¹⁴ Daniel Brumberg, "The Middle East's Muffled Signals," 15 September 2003; available from <http://foreignpolicy.com/story.php?story ID=13763.html>; Internet; accessed 15 September 2003.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Daniel L. Byman, and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Iraq's Coming Democracy," 19 September 2003; available from <<http://www.ndol.org/blueprint/2003-mar-apr12-iraq-democracy.html>>; internet; accessed 19 September 2003.

¹⁷ D'Arcy Doran, "Prominent Shiite Cleric Dies in Iraq Blast," The Sentinel, 29 August 2003, 1A, p. 1.

¹⁸ Patrick Basham, "Flying Blind on the Path to a Democratic Iraq," 4 May 2003: available from <http://www.cato.org/cgi-bin/scripts/printtech.cgi/dailys/05-04-03.html>: Internet; accessed 20 August 2003.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Helen Chapin Metz, Iraq A Country Study (Washington, D.C. DA Publication, 1991) 36.

²¹ Nelson A. Rockefeller, The Future of Federalism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 6-10.

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²⁵ Vamik Volkan, "Ethnonationalistic Rituals: An Introduction," *Mind and Human Interaction*, Vol. 4: 13-14, 1992.

²⁶ Ibid.

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²⁸ Ibid., 216.

²⁹ Thomas L. Friedman, *New York Times*, 2 January 2004: available from <<https://webmail.us.army.mil/attach/LDESP%20News%20Update%20from%20Iraq%20.html>>; Internet; accessed 2 January 2004.

³⁰ Toby Dodge, Steven Simon eds., *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2003), 79.

³¹ "Matters Improving in Iraq, Panelists Say," *AUSA News*, November 2003, p. 14.

³² Dobbins, p. 2.

³³ Negussay Ayele, "Reflections on Possibilities and Probabilities of Confederation in Northeast Africa," 29 August 2003: available from <http://www.ethiopians.com/Views/Negussay_Ayele_on_Confederation.htm>; Internet; accessed 29 August 2003.

³⁴ Ibid., Basham p.3 of 3.

³⁵ Council On Foreign Relations, *Iraq: The Day After* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2003), 29,30.

³⁶ Dobbins, p. 190.

³⁷ David R. Smoch, *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2002), 7,8.

³⁸The concept of the “Islamic Reformation” was based on remarks made by Dr. Larry Goodson in the Noon Time Lecture given at the AWC on 21 October 2003.

³⁹(1) Formal recognition of Yezidi religion as a religion which believes in the One God - and putting that down in the permanent constitution of Iraq and the constitution of Kurdistan territory (North). (2) Considering Yezidi area a part of Kurdistan territory taking into consideration the right of self-management in Yezidi areas.(3) Representation of Yezidis in the Legislative and Executive councils in Kurdistan and Iraq according to their percentage to the whole population in Kurdistan and Iraq. (4) Forming two institutions for Yezidi affairs; one of them to be attached with the Ministry of Justice and the other to the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs.(5) Removing all forms of ethnic changes, deportation and administrative changes; returning their possessions and compensating them for their material and moral damages.(6) Abolishing of all severe decisions and measures issued by the previous regime towards Yezidis.(7) Fixing (Lalish Temple) and all other religious shrines of Yezidis within Holy Places in Iraq.(8) Legal representation of Yezidis in the drafting committee of the permanent constitution of Iraq.

⁴⁰ Ibid., AUSA News, p.14.

⁴¹ Barber, p. 65.

⁴² Volkan. p.14.

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